

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-33 were pending in this application on the June 30, 2004 mailing date of the current office action, in which claims 1-15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 32 are allowed and claims 18, 21 and 27 are acknowledged by the Examiner as being allowable, but are objected to as depending from one or more rejected base claims. The remainder of the pending claims (i.e., claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 30 and 33) are rejected in the current office action pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

As indicated above, claim 16 is amended herein to incorporate the features of claim 17 (which depends from claim 16) and claim 18 (which depends from claim 17). Therefore, claim 17 and claim 18 are canceled herein as well. This amendment is believed to place claim 16 in condition for allowance based at least on the Examiner's acknowledgement that claim 18 is directed to allowable subject matter. This amendment also places claims 19-21, 24, 27, 30 and 33 in condition for allowance, for at least the reason that each of these claims depends from claim 16.

Applicant notes, for the record, that claims 17 and 18 are canceled and claim 16 is amended herein solely to expedite allowance of this application. By amending and canceling these claims, Applicant does not acquiesce to their rejections, or to the reasons offered by the Examiner in support of such rejections. Also, by amending and canceling these claims, Applicant does not dedicate their subject matter - as previously pending and/or as originally filed - to the public.

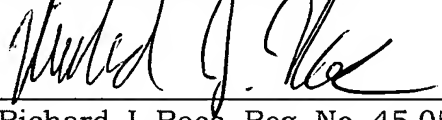
In view of the amendments and/or remarks above, claims 1-16 and 19-33 are believed to be patentable. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of claims of the currently rejected and objected to claims are respectfully requested.

If the undersigned can be of any assistance in advancing the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to contact him through the information given below.

Date: September 10, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
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